



consumer news

Office of Consumer Affairs
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Door-to-door sales

Federal Trade Commission has issued a regulation giving consumers a 3-day cooling-off period in which they can cancel, without penalty or fee, a purchase made from a door-to-door salesman. When in effect, the regulation will apply to consumer goods & services costing \$25 or more.

FTC said the regulation is designed to give consumers a more equal footing with the forceful & misleading practices used by some door-to-door salesmen. FTC in the past has received complaints about high-pressure tactics, misrepresentations of the nature & price of the product, false savings claims & the nuisance created by an uninvited salesman who refuses to leave the house until he makes a sale.

The following are major provisions of the new rule:

- You have 3 business days in which to cancel your purchase of goods or services bought from a door-to-door salesman if the price is \$25 or more, but you must cancel the purchase by written notification (mail or personal delivery) to the salesman's office.
- At the time of your purchase, the salesman must give you a sales contract & an oral explanation of your right to cancel as well as give you a written notice with a form you can use to cancel your purchase.
- Both the sales contract & cancellation notice must be in the same language that the salesman used in his sales presentation. (This provision is primarily for the benefit of Spanish-speaking consumers because of situations in which the sales presentation is in Spanish, but the contract & cancellation explanation are in English.)
- Upon cancellation, you must have available at your residence the goods that have been delivered. If the salesman does not pick up the goods or make arrangements for their return to him or his company within 20 business days after cancellation of the sale, you may keep the goods.
- The salesman must pay for all expenses associated with the return of the goods.
- Within 10 business days after he receives your cancellation notice, the salesman must return to you any payment you made & any item you traded in as part of the sales agreement; he must also cancel any installment credit plan, note, mortgage or other security interest created by the sales contract.

Certain transactions are not covered by the FTC's regulation:

- Purchases made entirely by mail or telephone;
- Purchases made in relation to earlier negotiations at a retail sales or service store or office;
- Purchases of stocks or bonds from a broker-dealer registered with Securities & Exchange Commission;
- Purchase of insurance;
- Purchase or rental of property.

FTC has not set an effective date for the regulation because of pending court action concerning the agency's rulemaking authority [CONSUMER NEWS: March 1]. However, it is encouraging all state & local governments with "cooling-off" legislation or regulations to remove any inconsistencies between their door-to-door sales requirements & the provisions of the FTC regulation.

Detergent labels to disclose phosphate levels

Following a round of negotiations between major household detergent manufacturers & Federal Trade Commission, the agency has announced that detergent makers have voluntarily adopted a uniform labeling procedure for disclosing the phosphorous content of their products.

The standard label will show what percentage of a detergent's formula consists of phosphorus & the equivalent in grams per cup. FTC said this voluntary labeling will help consumers, who are concerned that phosphates may contribute to water pollution, compare the phosphate levels of detergents.

FTC has reported that among the companies agreeing to the voluntary labeling are the nation's 3 biggest soap makers, who account for nearly 90% of detergent sales in this country: Procter & Gamble Co., Lever Brothers Co. & Colgate-Palmolive Co. FTC is obtaining letters of intention to comply from the remaining detergent companies.

An FTC regulation requiring label warnings that phosphate detergents contribute to water pollution is still pending. FTC has delayed any action on this requirement until additional information on the relationship of phosphates to water pollution is available.

Recall report

The following is a summary of Food & Drug Administration's list of products recently recalled. The complete list is available free on a weekly basis from Press Office, Office of the Assistant Commissioner for Public Affairs, Food & Drug Administration, Rockville, MD 20852.

Prulose Complex Specially Prepared Bulk Laxative; each tablet contains 130 mg dehydrated prune concentrate, 389 mg methylcellulose, 1 mg oxphenisatin acetate. Made by Warner-Lambert Pharmaceutical Co., Lititz, PA. Estimate 300,000 tablets remaining on market at initiation of recall.

Reason for recall: FDA has concluded that the benefit-to-risk ratio for the oxyphenisatin acetate drug is unfavorable & continued marketing is unjustified.

Procedure: Voluntary letter by Standard Laboratories Inc. of Lititz, PA, a subsidiary of Warner-Lambert, to retail stores nationwide.

Elbo spaghetti in cellophane bags labeled: "Lange's Wheat-Soy Spaghetti Net Weight 13 ozs"; whole wheat macaroni in cellophane bags labeled in part: "Lange's Whole Wheat Macaroni Net Weight 13 ozs"; mixed vegetable macaroni in cellophane bags labeled in part: "Lange's Mixed Vegetable Macaroni Net Weight 13 ozs." Made by Oregon Macaroni Co., Portland, OR, & repacked by Nu Vita Foods Inc., Portland.

Reason for recall: Salmonella contamination.

Procedure: Voluntary letter by repacker to retail stores nationwide.

Therapeutic Multi-vitamin tablets in 100- & 1000-tablet glass bottles & 20,000-tablet drums with lot numbers 5066-OM, ZK & YK. Made by Strong Cobb Arner Inc., Cleveland. Estimate 100,000 tablets remain on the market.

Reason for recall: Subpotency in Vitamin B-1.

Procedure: Voluntary letter from manufacturer to hospitals & wholesalers nationwide.

Natural organic vitamin & mineral food supplement made by Strong Cobb Arner of California, Sun Valley, CA, for Natural Vitamins Inc. of South Elmonte, CA, & daily multiple vitamins & minerals food supplement made by the same company for Natura Vigor Natural Products of Santa Fe Springs, CA. Lot number E2-6219.

Reason for recall: Subpotency in declared Vitamin C.

Procedure: Voluntary letter by manufacturer to retail stores nationwide.

Consumer Advisory Council

President Nixon has appointed 4 new members to the 12-member Consumer Advisory Council & reappointed 3 members. Terms of the 5 other members have not expired [CONSUMER NEWS: Oct. 1, 1971]. Virginia Knauer, Director of Office of Consumer Affairs, is an ex officio member of the council & its Executive Secretary. The council advises Mrs. Knauer on consumer interests & problems.

New members for a 2-year term are Virginia F. Cutler of Brigham Young University; John T. Kehoe of California's Consumer Affairs Dept.; Joseph F. Smith of Neighborhood Consumer Information Center in Washington, DC. Camille A. Haney of Wisconsin's Justice Dept. is a new member for a term ending in Sept. 1973. Reappointed members for a 2-year term are Stewart M. Lee of Geneva College; Jean Mayer of Harvard University; Eunice P. Howe of Massachusetts Consumer Council. The President redesignated Mrs. Howe as Chairman.

FTC wants more data about soap & detergent claims

Federal Trade Commission has ordered 14 makers & advertisers of soap & detergent products to submit documentation for certain advertising claims. This is the second time FTC has issued advertising substantiation orders to the soap & detergent industry. The first round of orders was to 22 makers & advertisers of soap & detergent products in June 1972.

In issuing the orders, the agency emphasized that it was not filing complaints against the companies nor suggesting that they are guilty of violations of any of its rules or regulations. FTC said it is merely gathering information as part of its continuing program to determine what substantiation exists to support major advertising claims.

The orders involve the following firms & products:

- American Brands Inc.—Extra Dry Facial Cleanser;
- American Home Products Corp.—Easy-Off Oven Cleaner;
- Armour-Dial Inc.—Dial;
- Church/Dwight Inc.—Arm & Hammer;
- Clorox Co.—Clorox & Jifoam Oven Cleaner;
- Colgate-Palmolive Co.—Irish Spring & Palmolive Crystal Clear;
- Dow Chemical Co.—Lemon Fresh Dow Oven Cleaner;
- Gold Seal Co.—Mr. Bubble;
- Lever Brothers Co.—Lifebuoy;
- Morton-Norwich Products Inc.—Janitor-in-a-Drum;
- Noxell Corp.—Noxzema;
- Procter & Gamble Co.—Tide;
- Purex Corp.—Brillo Household Cleaner & Purex;
- U.S. Borax & Chemical Corp.—Borateem.

The following are typical of claims for which FTC has requested substantiation:

- A liquid bleach like Clorox kills more viruses & bacteria than any other type of household disinfectant.
- Noxzema is greaseless, a moisturizer & cleans as effectively as soap without drying as soap does.
- Clothes that are so dirty they appear to be ruined can be effectively cleaned & restored by washing them in Tide.
- Purex gets out dirt other bleaches leave behind.

Consumer manual

Federal Communications Commission has published a manual for consumers who want to determine whether local radio & television stations are meeting their community responsibilities. *The Public & Broadcasting—A Procedure Manual* explains (1) how FCC handles complaints; (2) how consumers can submit complaints to stations & FCC; (3) how consumers can support or object to applications for broadcasting licenses; (4) how consumers can participate in licensing hearings.

To get a free copy of the manual, write to Federal Communications Commission, 1919 M St. N.W., Washington, DC 20554.

New Federal publications

Cheese in Family Meals: A Guide for Consumers, published by Agriculture Dept.; 20¢ from Consumer Product Information, Washington, DC 20407; stock #0100-1592.

Consumer Product Index (an index of selected Federal publications on how to buy, use & take care of consumer products), published by Consumer Product Information Coordinating Center; free from Consumer Product Information, Washington, DC 20407.

Students Ask About Inflation & Price Controls (question-&-answer discussion between C. Jackson Grayson Jr., Price Commission Chairman, & a group of high school seniors), published by Price Commission; free from Office of Public Affairs, Price Commission Washington, DC 20508.

CN Notebook

Here are more Shop Harder suggestions from CONSUMER NEWS readers:

Mrs. James D. Hansen Jr. of Indianapolis sends an unusual money-saving tip: "One of the cheapest, most nutritious & amazingly popular snacks for our preschoolers is cooked chicken gizzards. They're easy to cook. . . . At 49¢ a lb. & boneless & practically fatless, they've got to be one of the best bargains around. Don't know if anyone else's children will like them, but it's certainly worth a try."

Mrs. Loretta Held of Milwaukee, OR, writes: "Instead of buying tv dinners to use on those hectic days, make your own with the leftovers. . . . Small amounts that are usually thrown out 'because it's not enough to save' would be just right for individual servings" in the inexpensive pans or trays that can be used over & over again.

Here's a tip that might be a little late for some readers, but Mrs. Frank Triplett of Havre De Grace, MD, explains: "During the summer months I watch the sales at grocery stores & lay in a supply of household things that will keep: paper goods, toilet articles, soap, detergents, rice, macaroni & some canned goods. Then, when the fuel bills & other winter expenses come, I have these things."

If you have a shopping suggestion to share with CONSUMER NEWS readers, send your tip to CN NOTEBOOK, CONSUMER NEWS, Office of Consumer Affairs, Washington, DC 20506.

ICC continues investigations of movers

Interstate Commerce Commission has announced it is now investigating North American Van Lines Inc., its 4th investigation of a moving company. Previously initiated investigations concern Aero Mayflower Transit Co., Allied Van Lines & United Van Lines. These are the 4 largest interstate movers of household goods.

ICC instituted the North American investigation because of the large number of consumer complaints about the company's service. The agency wants to find out the extent of the company's compliance with ICC's consumer protection regulations.

In August, the agency issued a cease & desist order against Aero Mayflower, directing it to comply with ICC regulations & suspending a portion of the company's operating rights for a period of 15 days beginning Dec. 1. Investigations of Allied & United continue.

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